

PROPOSITIONS  
CONCERNING THE  
SUBJECT of BAPTISM  
AND  
CONSOCIATION of CHURCHES,

Collected and Confirmed out of the WORD of GOD

B Y A

SYNOD of ELDERS

A N D

MESSENGERS of the CHURCHES  
in Massachusetts-Colony in New-England.

Assembled at BOSTON, according to Appointment of the  
Honoured GENERAL COURT,  
In the Year 1662.

---

At a GENERAL COURT held at Boston in New-  
England the 8<sup>h</sup>. of October, 1662.

The Court having Read over this Result of the Synod, judge me to  
Commande same unto the Consideration of all the Churches and  
People of this Jurisdiction; And for what end doe Order the Printing  
thereof.

By the Court. Edward Rawson Secret.

---

C A M B R I D G E:

Printed by S. G. for Hezekiah Usher at Boston in  
New-England. 1662.



# THE PREFACE TO THE CHRISTIAN READER;

And especially to the Churches of *Massachusetts-Colony*  
in *NEW-ENGLAND.*

 Hat one end designed by God's All-disposing Providence, in leading so many of his poor people into this Wilderness, was to lead them unto a distinct discerning and practise of all the Wyses and Ordinances of his House according to Scripture-pattern, may seem an Observation not to be despised. That we are fit or able for so great a service, the sense of our own feebleness forbids us to think. But that we have large and great opportunity for it, none will deny. For, besides the useful Labours and Contemplations of many of the Lords Worthies in other places, and in former times, contributing to our Help, and shewing our Principles to be neither novell nor singular, the advantage of Experience and Practice, and the occasion thereby given for daily searching into the Rule, is considerable. And He that hath made the path of the just as the shining light, is wont still to give unto them further light, as the progress of their path requires further practise, making his Word a Lanthorn to their feet, to shew them their way from step to step, though haply sometimes they may not see far before them. It is matter of bumbling to us, that we have made no better improvement of our opportunities this way; but some Fruits God hath given, and is to be praised for.

In former years, and while sundry of the Lords eminent Servants, now at rest from their labours, were yet with us, A Platform of Church-Discipline, comprising the brief summe thereof, especially in reference to the Constitution of Churches (which was our first work when we came into this Wilderness) was agreed upon by a Synod held at Cambridge, and published to the world: From which (as to the substance thereof) we yet see no cause to recede. Some few particulars referring to the Continuation and Combination of Churches, needed yet a more ex-

### The Preface

plicite stating and reducing unto practise. For though the Principles thereof were included in what is already published; yet that there hath been a defect in practise (especially since of late years there was more occasion for it) is too too apparent: For the rectifying whereof, a more particular Explication of the Doctrine also about these things, is now necessary.

In order hereunto, by the Care and Wisdome of our Honour'd General Court, calling upon all the Churches of this Colony, to send their Elders and Messengers, this Synod was assembled, who after earnest Supplications for Divine Assistance, having consulted the holy Scriptures touching the Questions proposed to them, have proceeded to the following Issue; hoping that if it might seem meet to the Father of Lights to guide the Churches unto a right Understanding and Practise of his Will in these things also, the beauty of Christ's wages and Spiritual Kingdom among us would be seen in some more compleatness than formerly. For that which was the prayer of Epaphras for the Colossians, ought to be both the prayer and labour of us all; viz. that we might stand perfect and compleat in all the will of God. And we trust it is our sincere desire, that his Will, all his Will, and nothing else but his Will, might be done among us. To the Law and to the Testimony we do wholly referre our selves, and if anything in the following Conclusions be indeed found not to speak according therewards, let it be rejected.

We are not ignorant that this dear Labour will by divers be diversly censured; some will account us too strict in the Point of Baptism, and others too laxe and large: But let the Scriptures be Judge between us all. There are two things, the Honour whereof is in a special manner dear to God, and which He cannot endure to be wronged in; viz. His Holiness, and His Grace. The Scripture is often putting us in minde how much the Lord loveth Holiness, and that in his House, and in the holy Ordinances therof, and how he abhorreth the contrary, Mal. 2.11. 1. Pet. 1.15. & 2.6. Lev. 11.44,45. Ezek. 22.26, & 44.7,8. And hence neuer dare we admit those unto the holy Table of the Lord, that are short of Scripture-qualifications for it; viz. Ability to examine themselves, and discern the Lords body. Nor yet receive or retain those in Church-estate, and own them as a part of the Lords holy People, that are visibly and notoriously unholie, wicked and prophanie: such we are bidden to put away from among us, 1. Cor. 5.13. and therefore ought not to continue among

to the Christian Reader.

among us. Neither may we administer Baptism to those whose parents are not under any Church-power or Government any where. To baptize such, would be to give the Title and Livery to those that will not bear the yoke of Christ's Disciples, and to put the holy Name of God upon them, touching whom we can have no tolerable security that they will be educated in the ways of Holiness, or in the knowledge and practise of Gods holy Will. Baptism, which is the Seal of Membership in the Church the Body of Christ, and an engaging Sign, imposing us to be the devoted Subjects of Christ, and of all his holy Government, is not so to be made a common thing, nor to be given to those, between whom and the God-less licentious world there is no visible difference: This would be a provocation and dishonour to the Holy One of Israel.

On the other hand, we finde in Scripture, that the Lord is very tender of his Grace; that he delighteth to manifest and magnifie the Riches of it, and that he cannot endure any straining or eclipsing thereof, which is both dishonourable unto God, and injurious unto men, Gal.2.21. Eph.2.7. &c 3.2,6,8. Rom 11.1,5. Acts 15.10,11. & 10.15 & 20.24,26,27. And in Special he is large in the Grace of his Covenant which he maketh with his visible Church and People, and tender of having the same strained. Hence when he takes any into Covenant with himself, he will not only be their God, but the God of their seed after them in their generations, Gen.17.7,9. and although the apostle wicked parent (that rejecteth God and his Ways) do cut off both himself and his Children after him, Exod.20.5. &c 34.7. Yet the Mercy and Grace of the Covenant is extended to the faithful and their seed unto a thousand generations, if the successive parents do but in the least degree shew themselves to be lovers of God, and keepers of his Covenant and Commandments, so as that the Lord will never reject them till they reject him, Exod 20.6. Deut.7.9. Psal.105.8,9. Rom.11.16—22. Hence we dare not (with the Anabaptist) exclude the Infant-children of the faithful from the Covenant, or from Membership in the visible Church, and consequently not from Baptism the Seal thereof. Neither dare we exclude the same children from Membership (or put them out of the Church) when they are grown up, while they so walk and act, as to keep their standing in the Covenant, and doe not reject the same. God owns them still, and they doe in some measure own

### The Preface

own kind : God rejects them not, and therefore neither may we ; and consequently their Children also are not to be rejected. Should we reject or exclude any of those, we should shorten and straiten the grace of God's Covenant, more than God himself doth, and be injurious to the Souls of men, by passing them from under those Dispensations of Grace, which are staled upon the visible Church, whereby the children of God's visible people are successively in their Generations to be trained up for the Kingdoms of Heaven, (whither the Elect number shall still be brought in the way of such means) and wherein he hath given unto Officers and Churches a solemn charge to take care of, and train up such, as a part of his flock, to that end ; saying to them, as sometimes to Peter, If you love me, feed my lambs. In obedience to which charge we hope it is, that we are willing and desirous (through with the inference of no small labour and burthen to our selves) to commend these Truths to the Churches of Christ ; that all the Flock, even the Lambs thereof, being duly placed under Pastoral Power, we might after a faithfull discharge of our Duty to them, be able to give up our account another day with joy and not with grief.

How hard it is to finde and keep the right middle way of Truth in these things, is knowne to all that are ought acquainted with the Controversies there-about. As we have learned and believed, we have Spoken ; but notwithstanding remembrance that we are poor feeble frail men, and therefore desire to be conversant herein with much humilitie and fear before God and man. We are not ignorant of variety of judgements concerning this Subject ; which notwithstanding, with all due reverence to Differents, after Religious search of the Scriptures, we have here offered what seems to us to have the fullest Evidence of Light from thence ; if more may be added, and may be found contained in the Word of God, this shall be no prejudice thereto. Hence also we are farre from desiring that there should be any rigorous imposition of these things (especially as to what is more narrow therein, and more controversial among godly men.) If the Honourred Court see meet so farre to adde their countertenance and concurrence, as to commend a serious consideration hereof to the Churches, and to secure those that can with clearness of judgement practise accordingly, from disturbance, that in this case may be sufficient. To tolerate, or to desire a Toleracion of damnable Heresies, or of Subversors of the Fundamenta's of Faith or Order, we're an irreligious

to the Christian Reader.

irreligious inconsistency with the love of true Religion : But to bear one with another in lesser differences, about matters of a more difficult and controverial nature, and more remote from the Foundation, and wherein the godly-wise are not like-minded, is a Duty necessary to the peace and welfare of Religion, while we are in the flesh of infirmity. In such things let not him that practiseth despise him that forbeareth, and let not him that forbeareth judge him that practiseth, for God hath received him.

But as we do not thus break from doubting of the Truth here delivered (Paul knows where the Truth lies, and is perswaded of it, Rom. 14.14. yet he can lovingly bear a Dissenter, and in like manner should we) So we do in the bowels of Christ Jesus command the consideration of these things unto our Brethren in the several Churches. What is here offered is farre from being any declining from former Principles, it is rather a pursuance therof; for it is all included in, or deducible from what we unanimously professed and owned in the fore-mentioned Platform of Discipline, many years since. There it is asserted, that Children are Church-members ; That they have many priviledges which others (not Church-members) have not ; and that they are under Discipline in the Church, chap. 12. sect. 7. and that will infer the right of their children, they continuing to walk orderly. And the other matter of Consociation, or exercise of Communion of Churches, is largely held forth Chap. 15. & 16.

It may be an Objection lying in the minds of some, and which many may desire a fuller Answer unto ; That these things, or some of them, are Innovations in our Church-wayes, and things which the Lord's Worthies in New-England, who are now with God, did never teach nor hold, and therefore why should we now, after so many years, fall upon new Opinions and Practises ? Is not this a declining from our first Purity, and a blameable Alteration ? To this : Although it were a sufficient Answer to say, That in matters of Religion, not so much what hath been held or practised, as what should be, and what the Word of God prescribes, ought to be our Enquiry and our Rule. The people in Nehemiah's time are commended for doing as they found written in the Law, though from the dayes of Joshua the son of Nun, unto that day, the children of Israel had not done so, Nehem. 8. 14, 17. See the like 2 Chron. 30.5,26. 2 Kings 23.21,22. they did not tye themselves to former use and custome, but to the Rule of Gods written Word, and so should.

### The Preface

should we. It was Thyatira's praise, that their good works were more at the last than at the first, Rev. 2.19. The Lord's humble and faishfull Servantes are not wont to be forward to think themselves perfect in their attainments, but desirous rather to make a progres in the knowledge and practice of God's holy Will. If therefore the things here propounded concerning the children of Church-members, and the Consecration of Churches, be a part of the Will of God contained in the Scriptures, (as we hope the Discourse ensuing will shew them to be) that doth sufficently bespeak their entertainment, although they had not formerly both held or heard of amongst us. Yet this must not be granted, the contrary being the Truth, viz. that the Points herein which may be most scrupled by some, are known to have been the judgement of the generality of the Elders of these Churches for many years, and of those that have been of most eminent esteem among us. As (besides what was before mentioned from the Platform of Discipline) may appear by the following Testimonies, from sundry Eminent and Woriby Ministers of Christin New-England, who are now with God.

First, Touching the children of Church-members.

Mr. Cotton hath this saying; The Covenant and Blessing of Abraham is that which we plead for, which the Apostle saith is come upon us Gentiles, Gal. 3.14. which admitteth the faithful and their Infant-seed, not during their lives, in case their lives should grow up to Apostacy or open Scandal, but during their infancy, and so long after as they shall continue in a visible profession of the Covenant and Faith, and Religion of their fathers: otherwile, if the children of the faithful grow up to Apostacy, or any open Scandal, (as Ishmael and Esau did) as they were then, so such like now are to be cast out of the fellowship of the Covenant, and of the Seals thereof. *Grounds and Ends of Baptism of Children, p.106. see also p. 13 31 34.* Again, The seed of the Israelites, though many of them were not sincerely godly, yet whilst they held forth the publick profession of God's people, Deut. 26.3--11. and continued under the wing of the Covenant, and subjection to the Ordinances, they were all accounted as holy seed, Ezra 9.2. and so their children were partakers of Circumcision. Yea further, though themselves were sometimes kept from the Lord's Supper (the Pasceover) for some or other uncleanness, yet that debarred not their children from Circumcision,

to the Christian Reader.

Circumcision. Against this may it not seem vain to stand upon a difference between the Church of Israel and our Churches of the New-Testament — For the same Covenant which God made with the National Church of Israel and their seed, it is the very same for substance, and none other, which the Lord makes with any Congregational Church, and our seed. *Query 9<sup>th</sup> of Accommodation and Communion of Presby. and Congregat. Churches.* And the same for substance w<sup>t</sup> h those *Querries*, was delivered by him in 12. Propositions, as Mr. Tho: Allen writes in Epis. to the Reader before Treas. of Covenant and those *Querries*. Now in the 8<sup>th</sup> of those Propositions he bath these words: The children of Church-members with us, though baptized in their infancy, yet when they come to age they are not received to the Lords Supper, nor admitted to fellowship of Voting in Admissions, Elections, Censures, till they come to profess their Faith and Repentance, and to lay hold of the Covenant of their parents before the Church; and yet they being not cast out of the Church, nor from the Covenant thereof, their children as well as themselves being within the Covenant, they may be partakers of the first Seal of the Covenant. Lastly, speaking to that Objection, That the Baptism of Infants overthrows and destroys the Body of Christ, the holy Temple of God; and that in time it will come to consist of natural and carnal Members, and the power of Government rest in the hands of the wicked. He Answers, That this puts a fear where no fear is, or a cautesl<sup>s</sup> fear. And in prosecution of his Answer be bath these words; Let the Primitive Practise be restored to its purity, (*viz.* that due care be taken of baptized members of the Church for their fitting for the Lords Table) and then there will be no more fear of pestering Churches with a carnal generation of members baptized in their infancy, then of admitting a carnal company of hypocrites confessing their Faith and Repentance in the face of the Congregation. Either the Lord in the faithfulness of his Covenant will sanctifie the hearts of the baptized Infants to prepare them for his Table, or else he will discover their hypocrisy and profaneness in the presence of his Church before men and Angels, and so prevent the pollution of the Lords Table, and corruption of the Discipline of the Church by their partaking in them. *Grounds and Ends of Baptism, &c. p. 161, 163.* See also *Holiness of Church-members,*

### The Preface

members, p. 41, 51, 56, 57, 63, 87. Bloody Tenant washed, p. 44, 78.

Mr. Hooker saith, Suppose a whole Congregation should consist of such who were children to Parents now deceased who were confederate, their children were true members according to the Rules of the Gospel, by the profession of their fathers Covenant, though they should not make any personal and vocal expression of their engagement as the fathers did. Survey, part 1. p. 48. Again, We maintain according to truth, that the believing parent covenants and confesseth for himself and his posterity, and this covenanting then and now is the same for the kinde of it. Part 3. p. 25. See p. 17, 18. & part 1. p. 69, 76, 77. And in the Preface, setting down sundry things, wherein he consents with Mr. R. he expresseth it is for one, that Infants of visible Churches born of wicked parents, being members of the Church, ought to be baptized. In these (with his) and several other particulars, we fully accord with Mr. R. And Part 3. p. 11. It is not then the Question, whether wicked members while they are tolerated si. fully in the Church they and their children may partake of the Priviledges? for this is beyond question, nor do I know, nor yet ever heard it denied by any of ours.

Mr. Philips, speaking of a people made partakers of Gods Covenant, and all the priviledges outwardly belonging thereto, b. faith, Themselves and all that ever proceed from them, continue in the same state, parents and chldren successively, so long as the Lord continues the course of his Dispensation; nor can any alteration befall them, whereby this estate is dissolved, but some apparent act of God breaking them off from him. Reply, p. 126. Again, speaking of that Holiness, 1 Cor. 7. 14. he saith, I take it of federal holiness, whereby the children are with the believing parents taken by God to be his, and by him put under his covenant, and so they continue when men of years, though they never have any further grace wrought in them, nor have any other state upon them, then what they had when they were born Ibid. p. 131. Again, a company become or are a Church, either by conveision and initial constitution, or by continuance of the same constituted Churches successively by propagation of members, who all are born in the Church-state, and under the covenant of God, and belong unto the Church, and are a Church successively so long as God shall continue his begin d. spen sation, even as well & as fully as the first. Ibid. p. 145. Mr.

To the Christian Reader.

Mr. Shepard in *Defence of the Nine Positions*, p 143. doth this expression, Concerning the Infants of Church-members, they are subject to Censures whosoever they offend the Church, as others are, though so long as they live innocently they need them not. And in the year 1649. not three months before his Death, he wrote unto a friend a large Letter (yet extant under his own Hand) concerning the Membership of Children, wherein he proveth by sundry Arguments that they are Members, and answereth sundry Objections against it, and sheweth at large what great good there is in Children's Membership. In which Discourses he affirmeth, That as they are Members in their infancy, so they continue Members when they are grown up, till for their wickedness they be cast out; and that they being Members, their seed successively are Members also, until by Dissolution or Excommunication they be unchurched: That though they are Members, it follows not that they must come to the Lords Supper, but they must first appear able to examine themselves, and discern the Lords Body: That the children of godly parents, though they do not manifest faith in the Gospel, yet they are to be accounted of Gods Church, until they positively reject the Gospel, Rom. 11. That this Membership of Children hath no tendency in it to pollute the Church, no more then in the Old Testament, but is a means rather of the contrary; And that there is as much danger (if not more) of the degenerating and apostatizing of Churches gathered of professing Believers, as of those that rise out of the seed of such.

Mr. Prudden in a Letter to a friend written in the year 1651. doth plainly express it to be his judgement, That the Children of Church-members, are Members, and so have right to have their Children baptized though themselves be not yet admitted to the Lords Supper.

His words are these: Touching the desire of such Members children as desire to have their children baptized, it is a thing that I do not yet hear practised in any of our Churches. But for my own part, I am inclined to think, that it cannot justly be denied, because their next Parents (however not admitted to the Lords Supper) stand as compleat Members of the Church, within the Church Covenant, and so acknowledged that they might have right to Baptism. Now they being in Covenant, and standing Members, their Children also are Members by virtue of their Parents Covenant and Membership, as well as they themselves were by virtue of their Parents Covenant and Membership. And they have not renounced that Covenant, nor are justly censured for breach of that Covenant, but do own it and profess it, and by virtue of it claim the privilege of it to their Children. Then he puts this his Argument into form thus: Those Children who are within the Covenant of the Church, and to Members of it, Baptism cannot be denied unto. But the Children in question are within the Covenant of the Church, and to Members of it. Therefore Baptism cannot be denied unto them. The Assumption is prov'd thus: The  
Children

## The Preface

Children of such Parents as are within the Covenant of the Church, and so Members of the Church, are themselves within the Covenant of the Church, and so Members of it. But the Children in question are Children of such Parents as are in Covenant, and so Members of the Church. Therefore they are so themselves. The Proposition is clear, because the Parents Covenant for themselves, and for their Children, *Deut. 29. 10.—16. Exod. 16. 8; 13.* And God accepts both, *Gen. 17. 12, 13;* the whole Nation is federally holy; *Ezra 9. 2.* they are expressly said to be in Covenant with their fathers, *Deut. 29.* not partly or partially in Covenant, *Rom. 9. 3, 4.* *Act. 2. 39,* and God styles himself their God as well as their fathers, *Gen. 17. 9, 8, 9.* and to have God to be our God, is to be in complete Church-Covenant with him. The Assumption is evident, because else such their Parents had not had right to Baptize the Seal of the Covenant, but that they had right unto, and received it; and the same right that they had, their Children have, who are included in their Covenant, as they were in their fathers— and are not less truly or less completely in Covenant.

Lastly, (to add no more) Mr. Nath. Rogers, in a Letter to a Friend, bearing date 18. II. 1652. hath these words: To the Question concerning the Children of Church-members, I have nothing to oppose, and I wonder any should deny them to be Members. They are Members *in sensu Ecclesiastico;* God to calls them, the Church is so to account of them: And when they are *adulti etatis;* though having done no personal act, yet are to be in Charity judged Members still, and till after due calling upon, they shall refuse or neglect to acknowledge and own the Covenant of their Parents, and profess their belief of, and subjection to the contents thereof—for Practise, I confess I account in our great default, that we have made no more real distinction between them and others, that they have been no more attended, as the lambs of the Flock of Christ: and whether it be not the cause of the corruption and woe ful desolation of our youth, *disquisi permittimus.*

So that it was the judgement of these Worthies in their time, that the children of Church-members are members of the Church as well as their parents, and do not cease to be members by becoming adult, but do still continue in the Church, until in some way of God they be cast out; and that they are subject to Church-discipline, even as other members, and may have their children baptized before themselves be received to the Lords Supper: and yet that in this way there is no tendency to the corrupting of the Church by unworthy members, or of the Ordinances by unworthy partakers. And in the Synod held at Cambridge in the year 1648. that particular point of Baptizing the children of such as were admitted members in minority, but not yet in full communion, was inserted in some of the draughts that were prepared for that Assembly, and was then debated and confirmed by the like Arguments as we now use, and was generally consented to; though because some few disented, and there was not the like urgency of occasion for present practise, it was not then put into the Platform that was after Printed. We need not mention the Meeting of Elders at Boston upon the Call of the Honour'd Court in the year 1657. where in Answer to XXI. Questions, since Printed, it is Point so particularly asserted. By all which it appeareth, that these are not things likely devised, or before unheard-of, nor can they justly be censured

to the Chi. Man Reader.

as Innovations or Declensions from the received Doctrine in New-England. It is true, that in the beginning of these Plantations, and the Infancy of these Churches, there was not so much said touching these things as there hath been since; and the reason is, Because then there was not the like occasion as since hath been: Few children of Church-members being then adult, at least few that were then married, and had children. Accordingly, when a Question was put about the priviledge of Members children, when come to years, these Churches then having been but of few years standing, our Answer was, That by reason of the Infancy of these Churches, we had then had no occasion to determine what to judge or practise in that matter. Answer to the 5<sup>th</sup>. and 6<sup>th</sup>. of 32. Questions: which may satisfie as the Reason why in our first beginnings there was no more said touching these Questions. But afterwards, when there was more cause for it, many of the Elders in these Churches, both such as are now living, and sundry who are now deceased, did declare their judgements as aforesaid, and this many years ago.

Secondly, Touching Confociation of Churches, take these few Testimonies, in stead of many more that might be alledged.

Mr. Cotton, Keyes, p. 54, 55. It is a safe and wholsome and holy Ordinance of Christ, for particular Churches to joyn together in holy Covenant, or Communion & Confociation among themselves, to administer all their Church-affairs (which are of weighty, and difficult and common concernment) not without common consultation and consent of other Churches about them. And how it is so, he there sheweth in all the particulars. See also p. 24, 25, 47, 59.

Mr. Hooker, Survey, see part 4. p. 1, 2. & p. 45. And in the Preface he professeth his consent with Mr. R. That Confociation of Churches is not only lawful, but in some cases necessary. That when causes are difficult, and particular Churches want light and help they should crave the assistance of such a Confociation. That Churches so meeting have right to Counsel, Rebuke, &c. as the case doth require. And in case any particular Church shall walk pertinaciously, either in the profession of Error or sinful Practise, and will not hear their counseil, they may and should renounce the right hand of fellowship with them. And after he sets down this of Confociation of Churches amongst other things, wherein he had leave to profess the joyn't Judgement of all the Elders upon the River; of New-haven, Guilford, Milford, Stratford, Fairfield, and most of the Elders in the Bay. By

### The Preface

which it is clear, that this point of Consecration of Churches is no new invention of these times, but was taught and professed in New-England many years agoe, for so it was we see in Mr. Hooker's time, and it is now above fifteen years since he departed this life.

To these of our own Ministers, we shall only add a passage in the Apologetical Narration of Dr. Goodwyn, Mr. Nye, Mr. Sidrach Simpson, Mr. Burroughes, and Mr. Bridge; wherein, besides much more to his purpose, touching the Remedy provided in the Congregational-way for mal-Administrations, or other miscarriages in Churches, p. 16—21. They set it down (in p. 27.) as their past and present Profession, That it is the most to be abhorred Maxime that any Religion hath ever made profession of, and therefore of all other the most contradictory and dishonourable unto that of Christianity. that a single and particular Society of men, professing the Name of Christ, and pretending to be endowed with a Power from Christ, to judge them that are of the same Body and Society within themselves, should further arrogate unto themselves an exemption from giving account, or being censurable by any other, either Christian Magistrate above them, or Neighbour-Churches about them. See also Mr. Burroughes Heart-Divis. pag 43,47.

Brethren, bear with us: Were it for our own Sake, or Names, or Interests, we shoudl not be sollicitous to beg Charity of you. With us it is a small thing to be judged of man's day. But it is for your sakes, for your children's sake, and for the Lord's sake, that we intreat for a charitable, candid, and considerate Acceptation of our labour herein. It is that the Congregations of the Lord might be established before Him in Truth and Peace, and that they might have one heart and one way in the fear of God, for the good of them and of their children after them. Do we herein seek our selves? our own advantage, ease or glory? Surely we feel the contrary! What is it we desire, but that we might do our utmost to carry your poor Children to Heaven; and that we might see these Churches bound up together in the Bonds of Truth and Peace? Forgive us this wrong. But should the Church-education of your children be by the want of your hearty concurrence, rendered either unseizable or ineffectual; should they live as Lambs in a large place, for want of your agreement to own them of the Flock, we beseech you to consider how uncomfor-table the account hereof would be another day. We pray with the Apostle, that you do no evil, not that we should appear approved,

but

to the Christian Reader.

but that you should do that which is good and right, though we be rejected. For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth: and this also we wish, even your perfection, 2 Cor. 13. 7,8,9. However, we hope after-ages will bear witness, that we have been in some measure faithful to the Truth in these things, and to this part of Christ's Kingdom also in our generation.

But we may not let pass this opportunity, without a word of Caution and Exhortation to the Youth of the Country, the Children of our Churches, whose Interest we have here asserted. Be not you puffed up with Priviledges, but troubled rather, in the awful sense of the Engagement, Duty and Danger that doth attend them: It is an high favour to set a place in Bethel, in the house of God, and in the gate of Heaven; but it is a Dreadful place: God will be sanctified in all that come nigh him. A place nigh unto God (or among his people who are near to him, Ps. 148. 14) is a place of gree. & fear, Psa. 89. 7. Take heed therefore unto your selves, when owned as the people of the Lord your God, (Deut. 27. 9,10.) lest there should be among you any root that beareth gall and Wormwood. Take heed that you do not asb a spirit of pride and vaingl. or of vanity and flattery, either challenge or use any of your Priviledges. Think not to bear the Name of Christians, without bearing the Yoke of Christ. Remember, that all Relations to God and to his people, do come loaded with Duty; and all Gospel-duty must be done in humility. The wayes of the Lord are right, and the humble and serious shall walk in them, but proud Transgressors shall fall therem. Be not sons of Belial, that can bear no yoke: Learn subjection to Christ's holy Government in all the parts and xayes thereof. Be subject to your godly Parents: Be subject to your Spiritual Fathers and Pastors, and to all their instructions, Admonitions and Exhortations: Be subject unto faithful Brethren, and to words of counsel and help from them: Ye younger, submit your selves unto the elder; and to that end, be clothed with humility. Lye under the Word and Will of Christ, as dispensed and conveyed to you by all his appointed Instruments in their respective places. Break not in upon the Lord's Table (or upon the Priviledges of full Communion) without due qualification, and orderly admission theremto, lest you eat and drink your own damnation. Be ordered, and take not upon you to order the aff.irs of Gods Family; that is not the place of those who are yet but in the state of Initiation and Education in the Church of God. Carry it in all things wth a spirit of humility, modesty, sobriety and

### The Preface, &c.

fear, that our souls may not sleep in secret for your pride, and that God may not resist & reject you as a generation of his wrath. Oh that the Lord would pour out a Spirit of Humiliation & Repentance upon all the younger sort in the Country, (yea & upon elder too, for our neglects) from Dan to Beersheba! Oh that we might meet at Bochim, because so many Canaanites of unsubdued, yea growing corruptions are found among us! Let it not be said, that when the first & best generation in New-England were gathered to their fathers, there arose another generation after them that knew not the Lord. Behold, the Lord had a delight in your fathers to love them, and he hath chosen you their seed after them, to enjoy these Liberties & Opportunities, as it is this day: Circumcise therefore the fore-skin of your hearts, and be no more stiff-necked, but yield yourselves to the Lord, and to the Order of His Sanctuary, & seek him, and wait on him in all his ways with holy fear and trembling: for the Lord your God is gracious and merciful, and will not turn away his face from you, if you return unto him; if you seek him he will be found of you, but if you forsake him, he will cast you off for ever.

We shall conclude, when we have given the Reader a short account of the Work ensuing. The Propositions in Answer to the first Question, were (after much discussion and consideration from the Word of God) Voted and Concluded by the Assembly in the particular terms as they are here expressed. The Arguments then used for their Confirmation, being drawn up by some deputed thereto, after they had been several times read and considered in the Assembly, were Voted and Consented to, as to the summe and substance thereof. The Answer to the second Question is here given with great brevity, partly because so much is already said theri-about in the foresaid Platform of Discipline, and partly by reason of great straits of time: But what is here presented was the joynct conclusion of the Synod. A Preface was desired by the Assembly to be prefixed by some appointed thereto, which is here accordingly by them performed.

Now the God of truth & peace guide us & all his people in the wayes to give us the fruits thereof; help us to feed his flock and his lambs, & to be fed by him as the sheep of his pasture, that when his chief-Shepherd shall appear, we may receive together a Crown of glory that fadeth not away, & may enter into the joy of our Lord, as those that have neither despised his little ones, nor denied to be our Brother's keeper: But having faithfully endeavored to promote the continuation of his Kingdom, & Communion of his people, may Rest & Reign with all Saints in the kingdom of his glory. Unto whom be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages world without end,



THE ANSWER  
OF THE ELDERS AND OTHER  
MESSENGERS

of the Churches, Assembled at Boston  
in the Year 1662.

T O

*The Questions Propounded to them by ORDER of the  
Honoured GENERAL COURT.*

Quest. 1.  Who are the Subjects of Baptism?

Answ: The Answer may be given in the following propositions, briefly confirmed from the Scriptures.

1 They that according to Scripture, are Members of the Visible Church, are the Subjects of Baptism.

2 The Members of the Visible Church according to scripture, are Confederate visible Believers, in particular Churches, and their infant-seed, i. e. children in minority, whose next parents, one or both, are in Covenant.

3 The Infant-seed of confederate visible Believers, are members of the same Church with their parents, and when grown up, are personally under the watch, discipline and Government of that Church.

4 These Adult persons, are not therefore to be admitted to full Communion, merely because they are and continue members

members, without such further qualifications, as the Word of God requireth themselves.

5 Church-members who were admitted in minority, understanding the Doctrine of Faith, and publickly professing their assent thereto; not scandalous in life, and solemnly owning the Covenant before the Church, wherein they give up themselves and their children to the Lord, and subject themselves to the Government of Christ in the Church, their children are to be Baptised.

6 Such Church-members, who either by death, or some other extraordinary Providence, have been inevitably hindered from publick acting as aforesaid, yet have given the Church cause in judgment of charity, to look at them as so qualified, and such as had they been called thereunto, would have so acted, their children are to be Baptised.

7 The members of Orthodox Churches, being found in the Faith, and not scandalous in life, and presenting due testimony thereof; these occasionally comming from one Church to another, may have their children Baptised in the church whither they come, by virtue of communion of churches: but if they remove their habitation, they ought orderly to covenant and subject themselves to the Government of Christ in the church where they settle their abode, and so their children to be Baptised. It being the churches duty to receive such unto communion, so farre as they are regularly fit for the same.

The Confirmation of these Propositions from the Scripture followeth.

*Proposition First.*

*They that according to Scripture are members of the visible Church, are the subjects of Baptisme.*

The truthe hereof may appear by the following evidences from the word of God.

1. When Christ saith, *Go ye therefore and teach, or (as the Greek is) disciple all Nations, Baptising them*, Mat.28.19  
he

he expresseth the adequate subject of Baptisme, to be *disciples*, or *discipled ones*. But *disciples* there is the same with *members of the visible church*:

For the visible Church is Christ's *school*, wherein all the members stand related and subjected to him, as their Master and Teacher, and so are his *scholars* or *disciples*, and under his teaching, as *verse 20.* And it is that visible spiritual Kingdome of Christ, which he there from his Kingly power, *ver: 18.* sendeth them to set up and administer in *ver: 19.* the subjects whereof are under his Lawes and Government: *verse 20.* Which subjects (or members of that Kingdome *i.e.* of the visible church) are termed *disciples* *verse 19.* Also in the *Acts* of the Apostles (the story of their accomplishment of that commission) *disciples* are usually put for *members of the visible church*: *Acts 1.15* *In the mds of the disciples:* who with others added to them, are called *the church*, *Acts 2.47*: The members whereof are again called *disciples*, *Acts 6.1,2.* *Acts 9.1,---- against the disciples of the Lord, i.e. against the church of God.* *1 Cor.15.9 Gal.1.13* *Acts 9.26 He assayed to jyn himself to the disciples.* The *disciples* at *Lysitra, Iconium and Antioch, Acts 14.21.22* are called *the church* in each of those places *verse 23.* So the *church* *verse 27.* the *disciples* *verse 28.* *Acts 18.22 the church at Cesarea;* *Acts 21.16 the disciples of Cesare.* So *Acts 18.23* with *chap. 15.41.* and *Gal.1.2.* *Acts 18.27 and chap. 20.1* with *ver: 17.28.* From all which it appeareth that *disciples* in *Mat.28.19* and *members of the visible church*, are termes equivalent: and *disciples* being there by Christ himself made the subjects of Baptisme, it follows that the members of the visible Church are the subjects of baptism.

2. Baptism is *the seal of first entrance or admission into the visible church*; as appeareth from those texts *1 Cor: 12.13.* *Baptised into one body*, *i.e.* our entrance into the body or church of Christ, is sealed by Baptisme: and *Rom: 6.3,5 Gal.3.27.* where it is shewed that Baptisme is the Sacrement of *union* or of *ing. aſting* into Christ the head, and consequently into the church his body & from the Apostles constant practise in baptising persons

persons upon their first comming in, or first giving up themselves to the Lord and them. *Act. 8. 12. & 16. 15, 33. & 18. 8.* and in *Act. 2. 41, 42.* they were baptized at their first adding to the Church, or admission into the Apostles fellowship, wherin they afterward continued. And from its answering unto circumcision, which was a seal of initiation or admission into the church; Hence it belongs to all and only those that are entred into, that are within, or that are members of the visible church.

3. *They that according to Scripture are members of the visible Church, they are in Covenant.* For it is the Covenant that constituteth the Church, *Deut. 29. 12, 13.* They must enter into covenant, that they might be established the people of Church of God. Now the initiatory seal is affixed to the Covenant and appointed to run parallel therewith, *Gen. 17. 7, 9, 10, 11.* So circumcision was: and hence called the covenant *Gen. 17. 13.* *Act. 7. 8.* and so Baptisme is, being in like manner annexed to the promise or Covenant, *Act. 2. 38, 39.* and being the seal that answereth to circumcision; *Col. 2. 11, 12.*

4. *Christ doth Sanctifie and cleanse the Church by the washing of water, i.e. by Baptisme Eph. 5. 25, 26* Therefore the whole Church and so all the members thereof (who are also said in Scripture to be Sanctified in Christ Jesus, *1 Cor. 1. 2.*) are the subjects of Baptisme: And although it is the invisible church, unto the spiritual and eternall good whereof, this and all other Ordinances lastly have respect, and which the place mentioned in *Eph. 5.* may in a special manner look unto, yet it is the visible Church that is the next and immediate subject of the administration thereof. For the subject of visible external ordinances to be administered by men, must needs be visible. And so the Apostles Baptized sundry persons, who were of the visible, but not of the invisible Church, as Simon Magus, Ananias and Sapphira, and others. And these are visibly Purchased and Sanctified by the bloud of Christ, *the Bloud of the covenant, Act. 2. 28. Heb. 10. 29.* Therefore the visible seal of the covenant, and of cleansing by Christs bloud belongs to them.

5. *The Circumcision is often put for the whole Jewish Church or for the members of the visible Church under the Old Testament.* Those within are expressed by [the circumcised] and those without by [the uncircumcised.] Rom: 15. 8. & 3. 30. Eph: 2, 11. Judg: 14. 3. &c 15. 18. Sam: 14. 6 & 17. 26, 36. Jer 9. 25, 26. Hence by proportion Baptisme (which is our Gospel circumcision, Col: 2. 11. 12.) belongs to the whole visible Church under the new Testament. Actual and personal circumcision was indeed proper to the males of old, females being but inclusively and virtually circumcised, and so counted of the circumcision: but the Lord hath taken away that difference now, and appointed Baptisme to be personally applied to both sexes. Act: 8. 12. & 16. 15. Gal: 3. 28. So that every particular member of the visible Church is now a subject of Baptisme. We conclude therefore that Baptisme pertains to the whole visible Church, and to all and every one therein, and to no other.

#### *Proposition 2d.*

*The members of the visible Church according to Scripture, are conser-  
derate visible believers, in particular Churches, and their infant-seed, i.e.,  
children in minorum, whose next parents, one or both, are in Cova-  
nant.*

Sundry particulars are comprised in this proposition, which  
wee may consider and confirmed distinckly.

Adult persons who are members of the visible Church, are by Partie: 1.  
rule confederate visible believers: Act: 5. 14. believers were ad-  
ded to the Lord. The believing Corinthians were members of  
the Chu:ch there Act: 18: 8 with 1 Cor 1. 2. & 12. 27. The  
inscriptions of the Epistles written to Churches, and calling the  
members thereof *Saints*, and faithfull, shew the same thing, Eph  
3. 1. Phi 1. 1. Col. 1. 2. And that confederation, i.e. covenanting  
explicite or implicite, [the latter preserveth the essence of  
confederation the former is duey and most desireable] is neces-  
sary to make one a member of the visible Chu:ch, appears: 1. Be-  
cause the Chu:ch is constituted by Covenant: for there is  
b. tween

between Christ and the Church the mutual engagement and relation of King and subjects, husband and spouse; this cannot be but by Covenant (internall, if you speak of the invisible Church, external of the visible) a church is a company that can say, God is our God and we are his people, this is from the covenant between God and them. *Deu: 29, 12, 13, Eze: 16, 8.* 3. The church of the Old Testament was the church of God by covenant *Gen: 17, Deu: 29* and was reformed still by renewing of the covenant *Exod: 24, 12. & 23, 16: & 34, 31 32. Neh: 9, 38:* Now the churches of the Gentiles under the new Testament stand upon the same basis or root with the church of the Old Testament, & therefore are constituted by Covenant, as that was *Rom: 11, 17, 18. Eph: 2 11, 12, 19 & 3: 6. Heb: 8: 10,* 3. Baptisme enters us into the Church Sacramentally, i.e., by sealing the Covenant. The Covenant therefore is that which constitutes the Church and infers membership, and is the *Vow* in Baptisme commonly spoken of.

#### *Partic: 2.*

The members of the visible Church are such as are confederate in Particular Churches. It may be minded that we are here speaking of Members so stated in the visible Church, as that they are Subjects to whom Church ordinances may regularly be administered, and that according to ordinary dispensation. For were it granted that the Apostles and Evangelists did sometimes Baptize such, as were not Members of any Particular Church, yet their extraordinary office, large Power and commission renders them not imitable therein by ordinary Officers. For then they might Baptize in private without the presence of a Christian assembly, as *Pnlip did the Eunuch.* But that in ordinary dispensation the Members of the visible Church according to Scripture, are such as are Members of some particular Church, appears, 1. Because the visible believer that professedly Covenants with God, doth therein give up himselfe to wait on God in all his ordinances. *Deu: 26: 17, 18. Mat: 28, 19, 20.* But all the Ordinances of God are to be enjoyed only in a particular Church. For how often do we find in the Scripture that they came together into one place (or met as a congregational particular Church) for the observation and enjoyment of the Ordinances. *Act: 2: 1, 44, 46.*

**C** 4. 31: & II. 26. & 20:7. I Cor 5: 4. & II. 18. 20: 33.  
**C** 14: 23. 2. The Apostle in his Epistles writing  
 to Saints or Believers, writes to them as in particular Churches.  
 I Cor 1: 2. Eph: 1:1. Phil: 1:1. Col: 1:2. And when the story of  
 the Acts speaks of Disciples other places shew that those are un-  
 derstood to be Members of particular Chur.ches, Acts 18. 23. with  
 Gal: 1: 2. Acts 21: 16. with Chap: 18: 22. Acts: 21: 26. & 14: 22,  
 23, 27, 28. All which sheweth that the Scripture acknowledgeth  
 no settled orderly estate of visible believers in Covenant with  
 God, but only in particular Churches. 3. The members of  
 the visible Church are Disciples, as was above cleared: now Dis-  
 ples are under Discipline and liable to Church-censures: for they  
 are stated subjects of Christ's Laws and Government, Mat: 28.  
 19, 20. but Church Government and censures are extant now in  
 ordinary dispensation, only in a particular Church. Mat 18.  
 17. I Cor: 5: 4.

The Infants-seed of confederate visible believers are also members Partic: 3.  
 of the visible Church. The truth of this is evident from the  
 Scriptures and reasons following.

1 The covenant of Abraham as to the substance thereof, viz, that Argum: 3  
 whereby God declares himself to be the God of the faithfull & their seed,  
 Gen: 17: 7. continues under the Gospel, as appears. 2 Because the  
 Believing in-churched Gentiles under the new Testament, do stand  
 upon the same root of covenanting Abraham; whi<sup>t</sup>ch the f<sup>i</sup>nes were  
 broken off from, Rom 11: 16, 17, 18. 2 Because Abraham in regard  
 of that Covenant was made a Father of many nations, Gen: 17: 4, 5.  
 even of Gentiles as well as Jewes, under New-Testament as well  
 as Old, Rom 4: 16, 17. Gal 3: 29. i, e, in Abraham as a pat-  
 tern and root, God (not onely shewed how he Justifies the be-  
 liever, Gal: 3: 6, 9. Rom: 4. but also) conveyed that covenant  
 to the faithfull and th<sup>eir</sup> seed in all nations, Luk: 19: 9. If a Son:  
 of Abraham, then Salvation, i, e: the Covenant-dispensation of  
 Salvation is come to h<sup>s</sup> house. 3. As that covenant was com-  
 municated to proselyte Gentiles under the Old Testament, so its  
 communication to the in-churched Gentiles under the new Testa-  
 ment is clearly held forth in diverse places Gal: 3: 14 the blessing of  
 Abraham.

*Abraham comprizeth both the internal benefits of Justification by faith &c which the Apostle is there treating of; and the external dispensation of Grace in the visible Church to the faithfull & their seed, Gen: 28 4. but the whole Blessing of Abraham, and so the whole covenant } is come upon the Gentiles through Jesus Christ. Eph: 2, 12, 19* They had been strangers, but now were no more strangers from the covenants of promise i, e, from the covenant of grace, which had been often renewed, especially with Abraham and the house of Israel, and had been in the external dispensation of it, their peculiar portion, so that the *Ephesians*, who were a far off, being now called and made nigh, v. 13-17. they have the promise or the Covenant of promise to them and to their Children, according to *Acts*: 2, 39. and so are partakers of that Covenant of Abraham, that we are speaking of.

*Eph: 3, 6.* The in-churched Gentiles are put into the same inheritance for substance ( both as to invisible & visible benefits according to their respective conditions ) are of the same body, and partakers of the same promise with the Jewes, the Children of Abraham, of old. The same may be gathered from *Gen: 9, 27. Mat 8 11, & 21, 43.* 4. Sundry Scriptures which extend to Gospel-times do confirme the same interest to the seed of the faithful which is held forth in the covenant of Abraham, and consequently do confirme the continuance of that covenant as *Exod: 20: 5.* there in the sanction of a moral and perpetual Commandement, and that respecting Ordinances, the portion of the Church, God declareth himself to be a *God of mercy, to them that love him, and to their seed after them in their generations:* consonant to *Gen: 17, 7.* Compare herewith *1 Sal. 105, 8, 9 & Dent. 7, 9.*

*Dent. 30, 6.* The grace signified by circumcision is there promised to Parents and Children, importing the covenant to both, which circumcision sealed, *Gen: 17.* and that is a Gospel-promise, as the Apostles citing part of that context as the voice of the Gospel, shewes *Rom: 10, 6-8.* with *Dent: 30, 11-14.* and it reaEheth to the Jewes in the latter dayes, ver. 1-5.

*Isay: 65 23.* In the most Glorious Gospel-state of the Church, ver. 17 -19. the blessing of the Lord is the promised portion of the offspring

*Spring or Children, as well as of the faithfull parents* *To Isai: 44.*  
*3,4. I Isai: 59.20, 21. Ezek: 37.25,26.* at the future calling of the Jewes, which those texts have reference to, (*Rom: 11. 26. Ezek: 37. 19-22,23 24.*) *their Children shall be under the promise or Covenant of special Grace to be conveyed to them in the Ordinances, I Isai: 59.21.* and be subjects of *David, 1, e, Christ their King Ezek 37. 25.* and have a portion in his *Sanctuary, vers: 26.* and this according to the tenor of the ancient covenant of *Abraham,* whereby God will be *their God (vñz.* both of parents and Children ) and they shall be his *People, vers: 26,27.* Now although more abundant fuitors of the Covenant may be seen in those times, and the Jewes then may have more abundant Grace given to the body of them to continue in the Covenant, yet the tenor and frame of the Covenant it selfe is one and the same, both to Jewes, and Gentiles under the New-Testament; *Gal: 3. 28. Col: 3.11. Heb. 8.10.* *The house of Israel, 1,e,* the Church of *God* both among *Jewes and Gentiles* under the new Testament, have that Covenant made with them, the summ whereof is, *I will be their God and they shall be my people:* whi

### ch

 is a renewing of that Covenant of *Abraham* in *Gen 17.* (as the same is very often over in those termes renewed in Scripture, and is distinguished from the Law, *Gal: 3. 16, 17. Heb 8.9* ) wherein is implied Gods being *a God to the seed as well as parents, and taking both to be his People,* though it be not exp.essed: even as it is often plainly implied in that expression of the Covenant in other places of Scripture: *Deut: 29.13. Jer: 31. 1. & 32.38, 39 & 24.7. & 30 22,20. Ezek: 37.27,25.* Also the writing of the Law in the heart, in *Heb: 8: 10.* is that heart circumcision whi

### ch

*Deut: 30. 6.* extends both to parents and seed. And the terme, *House of Israel,* doth according to Scripture-use fitly expresse and take in (especially as to the external administration of the Covenant) both parents and Children : among both which are found that elect and laved number, that make up the invisible Israel compare *Jer: 13. 11. & 9.26. Isai: 5. 7. Hof: 1. 6. Ezek: 39. 25.* Neither may we exclude the least in age from the good of that promise, *Heb 8: 11,* (they being sometimes pointed to by that phrase, *from the least*

*to the greatest, Jer. 44:12. with verse 7.) no more then the least in other respects; compare Isa. 54:13.*

In *Act 2:39.* at the passing of those Jews into New Testament Church estate, the Lord is so far from repealing the Covenant-interest that was granted unto children in the former Testament, or from making the children there losers by their Parents faith, that he doth expressly renew the old grant, and tells them that the promise or covenant, (for the promise and the covenant are terms that do mutually infer each other; compare *Act 3:25. Gal. 3:16, 17, 18, 29. Rom. 4:16. Heb. 6:17*) is to them and to their children: and the same is asserted to be the appointed portion of the far off Gentiles, when they should be called. By all which it appeareth, that the covenant of *Abraham, Gen. 17:7.* whereby God is the God of the faithfull and their seed, continues under the *Gospel.*

Now if the seed of the faithful be still in the covenant of *Abraham,* then they are members of the visible *Church;* 1. Because that covenant of *Abraham, Gen. 17:7.* was properly church-covenant, or the covenant which God makes with his visible church, i.e. the covenant of grace considered in the external dispensation of it, and in the promises and priviledges that belong to that dispensation. For many were taken into that covenant, that were never of the invisible church: and by that covenant, the family of *Abraham,* as also by the renewing thereof, the house of Israel afterward were established the visible church of God, *Gen. 17.* and *Dent. 29:12, 13.* and from that covenant men might be broken off, *Gen. 17:14. Rom. 11:17, 19.* and to that covenant, Circumcision, the badge of church-membership, was annexed. Therefore the covenantees therein were & are church-members. 2. Because in that covenant, the seed are spoken of in terms describing or inferring church-membership, as well as their parents: for they have God for their God, and are his people, as well as the parents, *Gen. 17:7, 8.* with *Dent. 29:14, 15.* They have the covenant made with them, *Dent. 29:14, 15.* and the covenant is said to be between God & them (between me & thee, and between thy seed after thee: so the Hebrew runs) *Gen. 17:7.* They are also in that covenant appointed to be the subjects of the insatutory seal of the covenant,

the

the seal of membership, Gen. 17:9,10,11. Therefore the seed are according to that covenant, members of the visible church, as well as their parents.

*Such seed or children are federally holy, 1 Cor. 7:14.* The word *Argum: 2.* [holyness] as applied to any sort of persons, is never in Scripture used in a lower sense than for federal or covenant-holiness, (the covenant-holiness of the visible Church;) but very often in that sense, Ezra 9:2; Deut:7:6. & 14:2,21: & 26:19: & 28:9: Exod:19:6: Dan:8:24: & 12: 7: Rom: 11:16: So that to say they are holy in this sense, viz. by covenant-relation and separation to God in his Church, is as much as to say, *they are in the covenant of the visible church, or members of it.*

From Mark 10:14,15,16: Mat 19:14: Childrens membership in *Argum: 3.* the visible Church, is either the next and immediate sense of those words of Christ, *Of such is the kingdom of heaven;* and so the kingdom of heaven, or of God, is not rarely used in other Scriptures to express the visible Church, or church-estate, Mat 25:1: & 21:43: & 8.11,12: or it evidently follows from any other sense that can rationally be given of the words. For those may not be denied a place and portion in the visible church, whom Christ affirms to have a portion in the kingdom either of invisible grace, or of eternal glory: Nor do any in ordinary course pass into the Kingdom of Glory hereafter, but through the Kingdom of Grace in the visible Church here. Add also, that Christ there graciously invites and calls little children to him, is greatly displeased with those that would hinder them, asserts them, notwithstanding their infancy, to be exemplary in receiving the kingdom of God, embraceth them in his arms, and blesseth them: all which shew Christ's dear affection to, and owning of the children of the Church, as a part of his kingdom; whom we therefore may not disown, lest we incur his displeasure, as the Disciples did.

*Such seed or children are disciples according to Mat 28:19:* as appears, *Argum: 4.* 1. Because subjects of Christ's Kingdom are equivalent with disciples there, as the frame of that Text shews, verse 18, 19,20. but such children are subjects of Christ's Kingdom, or of the kingdom of heaven, Mat:19:14: In the discipling of all Nations

Nations intended in Mat. 28.19. the kingdom of God, which had been the portion of the Jews, was communicated to the Gentiles, according to Mat. 21.43. But in the kingdom of God these children have an interest or portion, Mark 10.14. 2. The Apostles in accomplishing that commission, Mat. 28.19. did disciple some children, viz. the children of discipled parents, Acts 2.39. & 15.10. They are there called and accounted *disciples*, whom the false teachers would have brought under the yoke of circumcision after the manner of Moses, verse 15. But many of those were children; Exod. 12.48. Acts 21.21. Lydia and her household, the Jaylor and all his, were discipled and baptized, Acts 16.15.31 33. Paul at Corinth took in the children into the holy school of Christ, 1 Cor 7.14. 3. Such children belong to Christ; for he calls them to him as his, to receive his blessing, Mark 10.13-16. They are to be received in his Name, Mark 9.37. Luke 9.48. They have a part in the Lord, John 22.24.25. therefore they are *disciples*: for to belong to Christ, is to be a disciple of Christ, Mark 9.41. with Mat. 10.42. Now if they be *disciples*, then they are members of the visible church, as from the equivalency of those terms was before shewed.

## Argum: 5.

The whole current and harmony of Scripture sheweth, that ever since there was a visible church on earth, the children thereof have by the Lord's appointment been a part of it. So it was in the Old, and it is and shall be so in the New Testament. Eve, the mother of all living, hath a promise made Gen. 3.15. not only of Christ the head-seed, but through him also of a Church-seed, to proceed from her in a continued lineal succession, which should continually be at visible enmity with, and stand at a distance, or be separated from the seed of the Serpent. Under that promise made to Eve and her seed, the children of Adam are born, and are a part of the Church in Adam's family: even Cain was so, Gen. 4.1,3. till cast out of the presence of God therein, verse 14. being now manifestly one of the seed of the Serpent, 1 John 3.12. and so becoming the father of a wicked unchurched race. But then God appointed unto Eve another, viz: Seth, in whom to continue the line of her Church-seed, Gen 4.25. How it did continue in his

his seed in their generations, *Genes. 5<sup>th</sup>* sheweth. Hence the Children of the Church are called Sons of God, (which is as much as members of the visible Church) in contradistinction to the daughters of men, *Gen. 6. 2*. If righteous Noah be taken into the Ark (then the onely preserving place of the Church) his children are taken in with him, *Gen. 7. 1*. though one of them, viz. Ham, after proved degenerate and wicked; but till he so appears, he is continued in the Church with his Brethren: So *Gen. 9. 25, 26, 27.* as the race of Ham or his son Canaan (parent and children) are cursed; so Shem (parent and children) is blessed, and continued in the place of blessing, the Church: As Japhet also, or Japhet's posterity (still parent and children) shall in time be brought in. The holy line mentioned in *Gen. 11. 10--26* shews how the Church continued in the seed of Shem from him unto Abraham. When that race grew degenerate, *Jos. 24. 2.* then God called Abraham out of his country, and from his kindred, and established his covenant with him, which still took in parents and children, *Gen. 17. 7, 9.* So it did after in the house of Israel, *Deut. 29. 11, 12, 13.* and when any eminent restoration or establishment is promised to the Church, the children thereof are still taken in, as sharers in the same, *Psal. 102. 16, 28. & 69. 35, 36. Jer. m. 32:38, 39. Isa. 65:18, 19, 23.* Now when Christ comes to set up the Gospel-administration of his Church in the New Testament, under the term of the kingdom of heaven, *Mat. 3:2. & 11.* he is so far from taking away children's portion and membership therein, that himself asserts it, *Mat. 19:14.* The children of the Gentile, but now believing Corinthians, are holy, *1 Cor. 7:14.* The Apostle writing to the Churches of Ephesus and Colossi, speaks to children, as a part thereof, *Eph. 6:1. Col. 3:20.* The unchurched Romans, and other Gentiles, stand on the root of covenanting Abraham, and in the Olive or visible Church, they and their children, till broken off (as the Jews were) by positive unbelief or rejection of Christ, his Truth or Government, *Rom. 11:13, 16, 17, --22.* The children of the Jews, when they shall be called, shall i.e. as yet in Church-estate, *Ie. 37. 20. with 54. 1. Ezechiel 37. 25-28.* From all which it appears, that the

series or whole frame and current of Scripture-expressions doth hold forth the continuance of childrens membership in the visible church from the beginning to the end of the world.

**Partic: 4.** *The seed or children who become members together with their Parents, {i.e. by means of their parents covenanting} are children in minority.* This appears, 1. Because such children are *holy* by their parents covenanting, who would else be unclean, *1 Cor. 7.14*; but they would not else necessarily be unclean, if they were adult; for then they might act for themselves, and so be holy by their personal covenanting: Neither on the other hand would they necessarily be *holy*, if adult, (as he asserts the children there to be) for they might continue Pagans: Therefore the Apostle intends only infants or children in minority. 2. It is a principle that carries evidence of light and reason with it, as to all transactions, Civil and Ecclesiastical, that *if a man be of age he should answer for himself*, *John 9.21*. They that are come to years of discretion, so as to have knowledge and understanding, fit to act in a matter of that nature, are to covenant by their own personal act, *Neh. 10.28,29. 1/4.44 5.* 3. They that are regularly taken in with their parents, are reputed to be visible *entertainers of the covenant, and avouchers of God to be their God, Deut. 26. 7,18. with Deut. 29.11,12* But if adult children should, without regard to their own personal act, be taken in with their parents, then some might be reputed *entertainers*, that are manifest *rejecters of the covenant*: for so an adult son or daughter of a godly parent may be.

**Partic: 5.** *It is requisite to the membership of children, that the next parents, one or both, be in covenant.* For although after-generations have no small benefit by their pious Ancestors, who derive federal holiness to their succeeding generations, in case they keep their standing in the covenant, and be not apostates from it; yet the piety of Ancestors sufficeth not, unless the next parent continue in covenant, *Rom. 11.22*. 1. Because if the next parent be cut or broken off, the following seed are broken off also, *Exod. 20. 5. Rom. 11.19,20.* as the Gentile believing parents and children were taken in; so the Jews, parents and children, were then broken

broken off. 2. One of the parents must be a believer, or else the children are unclean, 1 Cor. 7 14. 3. If children may be accounted members and baptized, though the next parents be not in covenant, then the Church should be bound to baptize those, whom she can have no power over, nor hope concerning, to see them brought up in the true Christian Religion, and under the Ordinances: For the next parents being wicked, and not in covenant, may carry away, and bring up their children to serve other Gods. 4. If we stop not at the next parent, but grant that Ancestors may, notwithstanding the apostacy of the next parents, convey membership unto children, then we should want a ground where to stop, and then all the children on earth should have right to membership and Baptism.

*Proposition 3<sup>1</sup>.*

*The Infant-seed of confederate visible Believers, are members of the same Church with their parents, and when grown up, are personally under the Watch, Discipline and Government of that Church.*

1. That they are members of the same Church with their parents, appears; 1. Because so were Isaac and Ishmael of Abram's Family-Church, and the Children of Jews and Proselytes of Israel's National Church: and there is the same reason for children now to be of the same Congregational Church with their parents. Christ's care for children, and the scope of the Covenant, as to obligation unto Order and Government, is as great now, as then. 2. Either they are members of the same Church with their parents, or of some other Church, or Non-members: But neither of the latter; therefore the former. That they are not Non-members, was before proved in *Prop. 2. Partic. 3.* and if not members of the same Church with their parents, then of no other. For if there be not reason sufficient to state them members of that Church where their parents have covenanted for them, and where ordinarily they are baptized and do inhabit, then much less is there reason to make them members of any other: and so they will be members of no particular Church at all; and it was before

fore shewed, that there is no ordinary and orderly standing estate of Church-members, but in some particular Church. 3. *The same covenant-all is accounted the act of parent and childe:* but the parents covenanting rendred himself a member of this particular Church; Therefore so it renders the childe also. How can Children come in with and by their parents, and yet come into a Church, wherein and whereof their parents are not, so as that they should be of one Church, and the parents of another? 4. Children are in *an orderly and regular state:* for they are in that state, wherein the order of Gods Covenant, and his institution therein, hath placed them; they being members by virtue of the Covenant of God. To say their standing is disorderly, would be to impute disorder to the order of Gods Covenant, or irregularity to the Rule. Now all will grant it to be most orderly and regular, that every Christian be a member in some particular Church, and in that particular Church, where his regular habitation is; which to Children usually is, where their parents are. If the Rule call them to remove, then their membership ought orderly to be translated to the Church, whither they remove. Again, order requires that *the childe, and the power of government over the childe, should go together.* It would bring shame and confusion for the childe to be from under government, Prov. 29.15. and Parental and Ecclesiastical government concurring, do mutually help and strengthen each other. Hence the parent and the childe must be members of the same Church; unless the childe be by some special providence so removed, as that some other person hath the power over him.

2. *That when these children are grown up, they are personally under the Watch, Discipline and Government of that Church,* is manifest: for, 1. Children were under Patriarchal and Mosaical discipline of old, Gen. 18.19. & 21.9,10,12. Gal. 5.3. and therefore under Congregational discipline now. 2. They are *witin* the Church, or members thereof, (as hath been, and after will be further proved) and therefore subject to Church-judicature, 1 Cor. 5.12. 3. They are *discipuli*, and therefore under discipline in Christ's school, Matth. 28.19,20. 4. They are

in Church-covenant, therefore subject to Church-power, Gen:17.7: with Chap. 18. 19. 5. They are subjects of the kingdom of Christ, and therefore under the laws and government of his Kingdom, Ezek.37.25,26. 6. Baptism leaves the baptized (of which number these children are) in a state of subjection to the authoritative teaching of Christ's Ministers, and to the observation of all his commandments, Mat.28.19,20. and therefore in a state of subjection unto Discipline. 7. Elders are charged to take heed unto, and to feed (i.e. both to teach and rule, compare Ezek.34.3,4) all the flock or Church, over which the holy Ghost hath made them overseers, Acts 20.28. That Children are a part of the flock, was before proved: and so 'told accounts them, writing to the same flock or Church of Ephesus, Eph 6.2: 8. Otherwise Irreligion and Apostacy would inevitably break into Churches, and no Church-way left by Christ to prevent or heal the same: whch would also bring many Church-members under that dreadful judgement of being *let alone* in their wickedness, Hosea 4. 16, 17.

#### Proposition. 4<sup>th</sup>.

*These Adult persons are not therefore to be admitted to full Communion, merely because they are and continue members, without such further qualifications, as the Word of God requireth thereto.*

The truth hereof is plain, 1. From 1 Cor.11.28,29. where it is required, that such as come to the Lords Supper, be able to examine themselves, and so discern the Lords body; else they will eat and drink unworthily, and eat and drink damnation, or judgement, to themselves, when they partake of this Ordinance. But mere membership is separable from such ability to examine one's self, and discern the Lords body: as in the children of the covenant that grow up to years is too often seen. 2. In the Old Testament, though men did continue members of the Church, yet for ceremonial uncleanness they were to be kept from full communion in the holy things, Ex.22.7,20,21. Lev.10.9,6,7. &c. 19v. 13,20. yea and the Priests and Porters in the Old Testament had

Special Charge committed to them, that men should not partake in all the holy things, unless duly qualified for the same, notwithstanding their membership, 2 Chron. 23. 19. Ezekiel 22. 26. & 44. 7. 8. 9. 23. and therefore much more in these times, where moral fitness and spiritual qualifications are wanting, membership alone is not sufficient for full communion. More was required to adult persons eating the Passover, then mere membership: therefore so there is now to the Lords Supper. For they were to eat to the Lord, Exodus 12. 14. which is expounded in 2 Chron. 30. where, keeping the Passover to the Lord, verse 5. imports and requires exercising Repentance, verse 6. 7. their actual giving up themselves to the Lord, verse 8. heart-preparation for it, verse 19. and truly rejoicing before the Lord, verse 21, 25. See the like in Ezra 6. 21. 22. 3. Though all members of the Church are subjects of Baptism, they and their children, yet all members may not partake of the Lords Supper, as is further manifest from the different nature of Baptism and the Lords Supper. Baptism firstly and properly seals covenant-holiness, as circumcision did, Gen. 17. Church-membership, Rom. 15. & planting into Christ, Rom. 6. and so members, as such, are the subjects of Baptism, Matt. 28. 19. But the Lords Supper is the Sacrament of growth in Christ, and of special communion with him, 1 Cor. 10. 16. which supposeth a special renewing and exercise of Faith and Repentance in those that partake of that Ordinance. Now if persons, even when adult, may be and continue members, and yet be debarred from the Lords Supper, until meet qualifications for the same do appear in them; then may they also (until like qualifications) be debarred from that power of Voting in the Church, which pertains to Males in full communion. It seems not rational, that those who are not themselves fit for all Ordinances, should have such an influence respecting all Ordinances, as Voting in Election of Officers, Admission and Censures of Members, doth import. For how can they who are not able to examine and judge themselves, be thoughtable and fit to discern and judge in the weighty affairs of the house of God? 1 Cor. 11. 28, 31. with  
*Proposition*

Proposition 5<sup>th</sup>.

*Church-members who were admitted in minority, understanding the Doctrine of Faith, and publickly professing their assent thereto; nor scandalous in life, and solemnly owning the Covenant before the Church, wherein they give up themselves and their children to the Lord, and subject themselves to the Government of Christ in the Church, their children are to be Baptized.*

This is evident from the Arguments following.

*These children are partakers of that which is the main ground of Argum: I. baptizing any children whatsoever, and neither the parents nor the children do put in any barre to binder it.*

1. That they partake of that which is the main ground of baptizing any, is clear; Because interest in the Covenant is the main ground of title to Baptism, and this these children have. 1. Interest in the covenant is the main ground of title to Baptism; for so in the Old Testament this was the ground of title to Circumcision, Gen 17.7.9,10,11. to which Baptism now answers, Col. 2. 11,12. and in Acts 2.38,39 they are on this ground exhorted to be baptized, because the promise or covenant was to them and to their children. That a member, or one in covenant, as such, is the subject of Baptism, was further cleared before in Propos. I. 2. That these children have interest in the covenant, appears; Because if the parent be in covenant, the childe is also: for the covenant is to parents and their seed in their generations, Gen: 17.7, 9. The promise is to you and to your children, Acts 2.39. If the parent stand in the Church, so doth the childe, among the Gentiles now, as well as among the Jews of old, Rom: 11.16,20,21,22. It is unheard of in Scripture, that the progress of the covenant stops at the infant childe. But the parents in question are in covenant, as appears. 1. Because they were once in covenant, and never since disconvenanted. If they had not once been in covenant, they had not warrantably been baptized; and they are so still, except in some way of God they have been disconvenanted, cast out, or cut off from their covenant-relation, which these have not been: neither are persons once in covenant, broken off from

it according to Scripture, save for notorious sin, and incorrigibleness therein, Rom 11:20. which is not the case of these parents. 2. Because the tenor of the covenant is *to the faulksfull and their seed after them in their generations*, Gen:17:7 even to a thousand generations, i. e. conditionally, provided that the parents successively do continue to be keepers of the covenant, Ex: d: 20:6 Deut: 7: 9,11 Psalm 105: 8. which the parents in question are, because they are not (in Scripture account in this case) *forfakers or rejecters of the God and Covenant of their fathers*: see Deut: 29:25,26. 2 Kings:17: 15--20. 2 Chron: 7: 22 Deut: 7:10.

3. That these parents in question do not put in any barre to hinder their children from Baptism, is plain from the words of the Proposition, wherein they are described to be such as *understand the doctrine of Faith, and publikely profess their assent thereto*: therefore they put not in any barre of gross Ignorance, Atheism, Heresie or Infidelity: Also they are not scandalous in life, but *soltainly own the covenant before the Church*; therefore they put not in any barre of Profaneness, or Wickednes, or Apostacy from the covenant, whereto they entered in minority. That the infant-children in question do themselves put in any barre, none will imagine.

**Argum: 2.** The children of the parents in question are either children of the covenant, or strangers from the covenant, Eph:2:12. either holy or unclean, 1 Cor: 7: 14 either within the Church or without, 1 Cor: 3: 12; either such as have God for their God, or without God in the world, Eph: 2:12. But he that considereth the Proposition, will not affirm the latter concerning these children: and the former being granted, infers their right to Baptism.

**Argum: 3.** To deny the Proposition, would be, 1. To straiten the grace of Christ in the Gospel-dispensation, and to make the Church in New Testameat-times in a worse case, relating to their children successively, then were the Jews of old. 2. To render the children of the Jews when they shall be called, in a worse condition then under the legal administration; contrary to Jer: 30: 20. Ez:iel 37: 25,26. 3. To deny the application of the initiatory Seal to such as regularly stand in the Church and Covenant,

venant,, to whom the *Mosaical dispensation*, nay the first institution in the covenant of *Abraham*, appointed it to be applied, *Gen. 17: 9, 10. John 7. 22, 23.* 4. To break Gods covenant by denying the initiatory Seal to those that are in covenant, *Gen. 17: 9, 10, 14.*

*Confederate visible Believers*, though but in the lowest degree such, *Argum: 4.* are to have their children baptized; witness the practice of *John Baptist*, and the *Apostles*, who baptized persons upon the first beginning of their Christianity. But the parents in question are *confederate visible Believers*, at least in some degree: For, 1. Charity may observe in them sundry positive Arguments for it; witness the terms of the Proposition, and nothing evident against it. 2. *Children of the godly* qualified but as the persons in the Proposition, are said to be *faithfull*, *Tu: 1.6.* 3. *Children of the Covenant*, as the Parents in question are, have frequently the beginning of grace wrought in them in younger years, as Scripture and experience sheweth: Instance, *Joseph, Samuel, David, Solomon, Abijah, Josiah, Daniel, John Baptist and Timothy.* Hence this sort of persons shewing nothing to the contrary, are in charity, or to Ecclesiastical reputation, *visible Believers*. 4. They that are regularly in the Church (as the Parents in question be) are *visible Saints* in the account of Scripture (which is the account of truth:) for the Church is, in Scripture-account, a company of *Saints*, *1 Cor: 14:33. & 1.2.* 5. Being in covenant and baptized, they have Faith and Repentance *indefinitely given* to them in the Promise, and sealed up in Baptism, *Deut. 30: 6.* which continues valid, and so a valid testimony for them, while they do not reject it. Yet it doth not necessarily follow, that these persons are immediately fit for the Lords Supper; because though they are in a latitude of expression to be accounted *visible Believers*, or in numero fidetur, as even infants in covenant are, yet they may want that ability to examine themselves, and that special exercise of Faith, wh. ch. is requisite to that Ordinance; as was said upon *Propof. 4.*

*The denial of Baptism to the children in question, hath a dangerous Argum: 5.* tendency to *Lirchion and Apostacy*; because it denies them, and

so the children of the Church successively, to have any part in the Lord; which is the way to make them cease from fearing the Lord, *Jos. 22.24, 25, 27.* For if they have a part in the Lord, i.e. a portion in Israel, and so is the Lord the God of Israel, then they are in the Church, or members of it, and so to be baptized, according to *Tropo. 1.* The owning of the children of those that successively continue in covenant to be a part of the Church, is so far from being destructive to the purity and prosperity of the Church, and of Religion therein, (as some conceive) that this imputation belongs to the contrary Tenet. To seek to be more pure then the Rule, will ever end in impurity in the issue. God hath so framed his covenant, and consequently the constitution of his Church thereby, as to design a continuation and propagation of his Kingdome therein, from one generation to another. Hence the covenant runs to us and to our seed after us in their generations. To keep in the line, and under the influence and efficacy of this covenant of God, is the true way to the Churches glory: To cut it off and disavow it, cuts off the prosperity of Son, & hinders it from being (as in the most glorious times it shall be) an eternal excellency, and the joy of many generations. This progres of the covenant establisheth the Church, *Deut. 29.13. Jer. 30.20.* The contrary therefore doth disestablish it. This obligeth and advantageth to the conveyance of Religion down to after-generations; the care whereof is strictly commanded, and highly approved by the Lord, *Psal. 78.4, 5, 6, 7. Gen. 18.19.* This continues a nursery still in Christ's Orchard or Vineyard, *Isa. 5.1, 7.* the contrary neglects that, and so lets the whole run to ruine. Surely God was an holy God, and loved the purity and glory of the Church in the Old Testament: but then he went in this way of a successive progres of the covenant to that end, *Jer. 13.11.* If some did then, or do now decline to unbelief and apostacy, that doth not make the faith of God in his covenant of none effect, or the advantage of interest therein inconsiderable: yea, the more holy, reforming and glorious that the times are or shall be, the more eminently is a successive continuation and propagation of the Church therein designed, promised and intended, *Isa. 60.15. & 59.21. Eze. 37. 25--28. P. 102.16--28. Jer. 32.39.* The

*The parents in question are personal, immediate, and yet continuing members of the Church.*

3. That they are *personal members*, or members in their own persons, appears, 1. Because they are personally *holy*, 1 Co. 7:14: not parents only, but [your children] are holy. 2. They are personally baptized, or have had baptism, the seal of membership, applied to their own persons: which being regularly done, is a divine testimony that they are in their own persons members of the Church. 3. They are personally under discipline, and liable to Church-censures in their own persons; *vide Propos. 3.* 4. They are personally (by means of the covenant) in a visible state of salvation. To say they are not members in their own persons, but in their parents, would be as if one should say, They are saved in their parents, and not in their own persons. 5. When they *commit iniquity*, they personally *break the covenant*; therefore are personally in it, Jer. 11:2, 10. Ezek. 16.

2. By the like Reasons it appears that children are *immediate members*, as to the essence of membership, (i. e. that they themselves in their own persons are the immediate subjects of this adjunct of Church-membership) though they come to it by means of their parents covenanting. For as touching that distinction of *mediate and immediate*, as applied to membership (which some urge) we are to distinguish 1. between the efficient and the essence of membership: 2. between the instrumental efficient or means thereof, which is the parents profession and covenanting; and the principal efficient, which is divine Institution. They may be said to be *mediate* (or rather *medio-say*) members, as they become members by means of their parents covenanting, as an instrumental cause thereof: but that doth nothing vary or diminish the essence of their membership. For divine Institution giveth or granteth a real and personal membership unto them, as well as unto their parents, and maketh the parent a publick person, and so his act theirs to that end. Hence the essence of membership, i. e. *Covenant-interest, or a place in communion with the visible Church,* is really, properly, personally and immediately the portion of the child by divine gift and grace. 1. 2. 25, 27. their children have  
a part

*a part in the Lord*, as well as themselves. *A part in the Lord* there, and *Church-membership* (or *membership in Israel*) are terms equivalent. Now the children there, and *a part in the Lord*, are *subject and Adjunct*, wh<sup>t</sup> nothing comes between, so as to sever the *Adjunct* from the *Subject*; therefore they are *immediate subjects* of that *Adjunct*, or *immediate members*. Again, their visible ingrafting into Christ the head, and so into the Church his body, is sealed in their Baptism; but in ingrafting nothing comes between the graft and the stock: Their union is immediate; hence they are immediately inserted into the visible Church, or *immediate members* thereof. The *little children* in *Deut. 29.11.* were personally and immediately *a part of the people of God*, or *members of the Church of Israel*, as well as the parents. To be in covenant, or to be *covenantee*, is the *formalis ratio* of a Church-member. If one come to be in covenant one way, and another in another, but both are in covenant or covenantees, (*i.e.* parties with whom the covenant is made, and whom God takes into covenant) as the children here are, *Gen. 17.7.8.* then both are in their own persons the *immediate subjects* of the *formalis ratio* of membership, and so *immediate members*. To *all* in covenanting, is but the instrumental means of membership, and yet children are not without this neither. For the act of the parent (their publick person) is accounted theirs, and they are said to *enter into covenant*, *Deut. 29.11, 12.* So that what is it that children want unto an actual, compleat, proper, absolute and immediate membership? (so far as these terms may with any propriety or pertinency be applied to the matter in hand.) Is it *Covenant-interist*, wh<sup>t</sup> is the *formalis ratio* of membership? No, they are in covenant. Is it *divine grant and institution*, which is the *principal efficient*? No: he hath clearly declared himself, that he grants unto the children of his people a portion in his Church, and appoints them to be members thereof. Is it *an act of covenanting*, wh<sup>t</sup> is the *instrumental means*? No: they have this also reputatively by divine appointment, making the parent a *publick person*, and accounting them to covenant in his covenanting. A different manner and means of conveying the covenant to us, or of making

making us members, doth not make a different sort of membership. We now are as truly, personally and immediately members of the body of fallen mankinde, and by nature heirs of the condemnation pertaining thereto, as Adam was, though he came to be so by his own personal act, and we by the act of our publike person. If a Prince give such Lands to a man and his heirs successively, while they continue loyal; the following heir is a true and immediate owner of that Land, and may be personally dis-inherited, if disloyal, as well as his father before him. A member is one that is according to Rule (or according to divine Institution) within the visible Church. Thus the Child is properly, & personally or immediately, *Partem* casts all men into two sorts, those *within*, and those *without*, i.e. *members*, and *non-members*, 1 Cor. 5. 12. It seems he knew of no such distinction of *mediate* and *immediate*; as puts a medium between these two. Object. If children be compleat and immediate members as their parents are, then they shall immediately have all Church-priviledges, as their parents have without any further act or qualification. Ans. It followeth not. All priviledges that belong to members, as such, do belong to the children as well as the parents: But all Church-priviledges do not so. A member as such, (or all members) may not partake of all priviledges; but they are to make progress both in memberly duties and priviledges, as their age, capacity and qualifications do fit them for the same.

3. That their membership still continues in adult age, and ceaseth not with their infancy, appears, 1. Because in Scripture persons are broken off, only for notorious sin, or incarrigible impenitency and unbelief, not for growing up to adult age, Rom. 11. 20. 2. The few children circumcised did not cease to be members by growing up, but continued in the Church, and were by virtue of their membership received in infancy, bound unto various duties, and in special unto those solemn personal professions that pertained to adult members, not as then entring into a new membership, but as making a progress in memberly duties, Deut. 26. 2--10. & 16. 16, 17 with Gal. 5. 3. 3. Those relations of *born-servants* and *subjects*, which the Scripture makes use of to set forth the state of children in the Church by, Lev. 25. 41. 42. Ezek. 37. 25 do not, (as all men know) cease with infancy, but continue in adult age. Whence also it follows, that one special end of

membership received in infancy, is to leave persons under engagement to service and subjection to Christ in his Church, when grown up, when they are fittest for it, and have most need of it. 4. There is no ordinary way of cessation of membership but by *Death, Dismission, Excommunication, or Dissolution of the Society*: none of which is the case of the persons in question. 5. Either they are when adult, members or non-members: if non-members, then a person admitted a member, and sealed by Baptism, not cast out, nor deserving to be cast out (the Church whereof he was still remaining) become a non-member, cast out of the Church, and of the unclean world; which the Scripture acknowledge not. Now if the parent stand member of the Church, the childe is a member also: For now the root is holy, therefore so are the branches, Rom. 11. 16. 1 Cor. 7. 14. The parent is in covenant, therefore so is the childe, Gen. 17. 7. and if the childe be a member of the visible Church, then he is a subject of Baptism, according to Prop. 1.

## Baptism: 6.

Such Church-members, whose liberty of birth, or some other extraordinary Providence, have been invisibly banished from publick acting as before said, yet have given the Church cause in judgment of charity, to look at them as so qualified, and such as had they been called thereto, would have so acted; their children are to be Baptized.

This is manifest. 1. Because the main foundation of the right of the childe to privilege remains, viz: God's institution, and the force of his covenant carrying it to the generations of such as continue keepers of the covenant, i.e. notwithstanding breakers of it. By virtue of which institution and covenant, the children in question are members, and their membership being distinct from the parents membership, refection not, but continues notwithstanding the parents decease or necessary absence: and if members, then subjects of Baptism. 2. Because the parents notwithstanding what is required in the fifth commandment, do through want of opportunity; which is not to be imputed as their guilt, so as to deprive the childe's privilege. 3. God reckoneth that is done in his service, to which there was a manifest desire and resolution, albeit the breaking of it were hundred; as in Gen. 22. to build the Temple, Ex. 16. 8, 18, 19, in Abraham to sacrifice his Son, Gen. 22. 8, 9. according to that in 2. Cor. 8. 12. Where there

there is a willing wende, it is accepted according to what a man bath, and not according to whas he bath not : which is true of this Church-duty, as well as of that of Alms.. It is an usual phrase with the Ancients in style such and such Martyrs *in voto*, and baptizet *in voto*, because there was no want of desire that way, though their desire was not actually accomplished 4. The terms of the Proposition import that in Charity, that is here done *interpretatively*, whch is mentioned to be done in the fifth proposition expressly.

*'Proposition 7<sup>th</sup>.*

The members of Orthodox Churches, being found in the Faith, and not scandalous in life, and presenting due testimony therof; these occasionally comming from one Church to another, may have their children Baptized in the church whither they come, by virtue of Communion of Churches : but if they remove their habitation, they ought orderly to renounce and subiect themselves to the Government of Christ in the Church where they settle their abode, and so their children to be Baptized. It being the churches duty to receive such unto communion, so farre as they are regularly fit for the same.

1. Such members of other Churches as are here described, occasionally coming from one Church to another, their children are to be baptized in the Church whither they come, by virtue of Communion of Churches : 1. Because he that is regularly a member of a true particular Church, is a subject of Baptism, according to Propf. 1<sup>st</sup>. & 2<sup>d</sup>. But the children of the parents here described are such, according to Proposition 5<sup>th</sup>. & 6<sup>th</sup>. therefore they are meet and lawful subjects of Baptism, or have right to be baptized. And Communion of Churches infers such acts as this is, viz: to baptize a fit subject of Baptism, though a member of another Church, when the same is orderly desired. (See *Plutiform of Discipline, chap. 15. sect. 4.*) For look as every Church hath a double consideration, viz. 1. Of its own constitution and communion within it self; 2. Of that communion which it holds and ought to maintain with other Churches: So the Officer (*the Pastor or Teacher*) thereof, is there set, 1. To administer to this Church constantly; 2. To do acts of Communion occasionally, (viz: such as belong to his Office, as *Baptizing* doth) respecting the members of other Churches, with whom this Church holds or ought to hold communion. 2. To refuse communion with untrue Church in full

full and pious action, is unlawful, and justly accounted Schismatical. For if the Church be true, Christ holdeth some communion with it; therefore so must we: but if we will not have communion with it in those acts that are good and pious, then in none at all. Total separation from a true Church, is unlawful: But to deny communion to good actions, is to make a total separation. Now to baptize a fit subject, as is the childe in question, is a lawful and pious action, and therefore by virtue of *Communion of Churches*, in the case mentioned to be attended. And if Baptism lawfully administered, may and ought to be received by us for our children in another true Church, where Providence so casts us, as that we cannot have it in our own, (as doubtless it may and ought to be;) then also we may and ought in like case to dispense Baptism, when desired, to a man and his full subject, being a member of another Church. To deny or refuse either of these, would be an unjustifiable refusing of *Communion of Churches*, and tending to sinful separation.

2. Such as remove their habitation, ought orderly to covenant and subject themselves to the Government of Christ in the Church, where they settle their abode, and so their children to be baptized; 1. Because the regularly baptized are disciples, and under the Discipline and Government of Christ: But they that are absolutely removed from the Church whereof they were, so as to be uncapable of being under Discipline there, shall be under it nowhere, if not in the Church where they inhabit. They that would have Church-privileges, ought to be under Church-power: But these will be under no Church-power, but as lambs in a large prison, if not under it there where their settled abode is. 2. Every Christian ought to covenant for himself and his children, or professedly to give up himself and his to the Lord, and thus in the way of his Ordinances, *Deut. 26. 17. & 12. 5.* and explicit covenancing is a duty, especially where we are called to it, and have opportunity for it: nor can they well be said to covenant implicitly, that do explicitly refuse a professed covenanting, when called thereto. And especially this covenanting is a duty, when we would partake of such a Church-priviledge, as Baptism for our children is. But the parents in question will now be professed covenanters nowhere, if not in the Church where their fixed habitation is. Therefore they ought orderly to covenant there, and so their children

to be baptized. 3. To refuse covenanting and subjection to Christ's Government in the Church where they live, being so removed, as to be utterly incapable of it elsewhere, would be a walking disorderly, and would too much favour of profaneness and separations; and hence to administer Baptism to the children of such as stand in that way, would be to administer Christ's Ordinances to such as are in a way of sin and disorder; which ought not to be, 2 Thess. 3. 6. 1 Chron. 13. 13. and would be contrary to that Rule, 1 Cor. 14. 40. Let all things be done decently and in order.

Quest. II. **V**Hether according to the Word of God there ought to be a Confession of Churches, and what should be the manner of it?

*Answ.* The Answer may be briefly given in the Propositions following.

1. Every Church or particular Congregation of visible Saints in Gospel-order, being furnished with a Presbytery, at least with a Teaching Elder, and walking together in truth and peace, hath received from the Lord Jesus full power and authority Ecclesiastical within it self, regularly to administer all the Ordinances of Christ, and is not under any other Ecclesiastical jurisdiction whatsoever. For to such a Church Christ hath given the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, that what they binde or loose on earth, shall be bound or loosed in heaven, Matt. 16. 19. & 18. 17. 18. Elders are ordained in every Church. Acts 14. 23. Tit. 1. 5. and are thereto authorized officially to administer in the Word, Prayer, Sacraments and Censures, Mat. 28. 19, 20. Acts 6. 4. 1 Cor. 4. 1. & 5. 4, 12. Acts 20. 28. 1 Tim. 5. 17. & 3. 5. The reproofing of the Church of Corinth, and of the Asian Churches severally, imports they had power, each of them within themselves, to reform the abuses that were amongst them, 1 Cor. 5. Rev. 2. 14, 20. Hence it follows, that Confession of Churches is not to hinder the exercise of this power, but by counsel from the Word of God to direct and strengthen the same upon all just occasions.

2. The Churches of Christ do stand in a sisterly relation each to other, Cant. 8. 8 being united in the same Faith and Order, Eph. 4. 5. Col. 2. 5. to walk by the same Rule, Phil. 3. 16: in the exercise of the same

*same Ordinances for the same ends, Eph.4. 11,12,13. 1 Cor.16.1:  
under one and the same political Head, the Lord Jesus Christ, Eph.1.  
22,23. &c 4.5. Rev. 2, 1. Which Union infers a Communion  
suitable thereunto.*

3. *Communion of Churches is the faithfull improvement of the gifts  
of Christ bestowed upon them for his service and glory, and their mu-  
tual good and edification, according to capacity and opportunity. 1 Pet.  
4.10,11. 1 Cor.12.4,7. & 10,24. 1 Cor.3. 21,22. Cantic 8.9.  
Rom 1.15. Gal.6.10.*

4. *Acts of Communion of Churches are such as these:*

1. *Hearty Care and Prayer one for another, 2 Cor. 11. 28.  
Cant.8.8 Rom.1.9. Coloss.1.9. Eph.6.18.*

2. *To afford Relief by communication of their Gifts in Temporal  
or Spiritual necessities, Rom.15.26,27. Acts 11.22,29. 2 Cor.  
8.1,4,14.*

3. *To maintain Unity and Peace, by giving account one to another  
of their publick actions, when it is orderly desired, Acts 11.2,3,  
4-18. Josh. 22.13 21,30. 1 Cor.10 32. and to strengthen  
one another in their regular Administrations; as in special by a  
concurrent testimony against persons justly censured, Acts 15.4,10.  
& 16.4,5. 2 Tim.4.15. 2 Thess.3.14.*

4. *To seek and accept Help from, and give Help unto each other:  
1. In case of Divisions and Contentions, whereby the peace of  
any Church is disturbed, Acts 15.2.*

*2. In matters of more than ordinary importance, [Prov.24.6.  
& 15.22] as Ordination, Translation, and Deposition of  
Elders, and such like, 1 Tim.5.22.*

*3. In doubtful and difficult Questions and Controversies, Doctri-  
nal or Practical, that may arise, Acts 15.2,6.*

*4. For the rectifying of mal-Administrations, and healing of  
Errors and Scandals, that are unhealed among themselves,  
3 John ver.9,10. 2 Cor.2. 6-11. 1 Cor.15. Rev. 2:14,15  
16. 2 Cor.12.20,21. & 13.2. Churches now have need  
of help in like cases, as well as Churches then. Christ's  
care is still for whole Churches, as well as for particula  
r persons; and Apostles being now ceased, there remains  
the duty of brotherly love, and mutual care and helpfulness  
incumbent upon Churches, especially Elders for that end.*

5. In love and faithfulness to take notice of the Troubles and Difficulties, Errors and Scandals of another Church, and to administer help (when the case manifestly calls for it) though they should neglect their own good and duty, as not to seek v. Exod. 23.4,5. Prov.24.11,12.

6. To Admonish one another when there is need and cause for it: and after due means with patience used, to withdraw from a Church or peccant party therein, obstinately persisting in Error or Scandal; as in the Platform of Discipline (chap. 15. sect. 2. partic. 3.) is more at large declared: Gal. 2. 11---14. 2 Thess. 3.6. Rom. 16.37.

5. Confession of Churches, is their mutual and solemn Agreement to exercise communion in such acts, as aforesaid, amongst themselves, with special reference to those Churches, which by providence are planted in a convenient vicinity, though with liberty reserved without offence, to make use of others, as the nature of the case, or the advantage of opportunity may lead thereunto.

6. The Churches of Christ in this Countrey having so good opportunity for it, it is meet to be commended to them, as their duty thus to associate. For 1. Communion of Churches being commanded, and Confession being but an Agreement to practise it, this must needs be a duty also, Psa. 119.106. Nehem. 10.28,29. 2. Paul an Apostle fought with much labour the conference, concurrence and right hand of fellowship of other Apostles: and ordinary Elders and Churches have not less need each of other, to prevent their running in vain, Gal. 2. 2,6,9. 3. Those general Scripture-rules touching the need and use of counsel and help in weighty cases, concern all Societies and Polities, Ecclesiastical as well as Civil, Prov 11.14. & 15. 22. & 20. 18. & 24. 6. Ecclis. 4. 9,10.12. 4. The pattern in Acts 15 holds forth a warrant for Councils, which may be greater or lesser, as the matter shall require. 5. Concurrence and Communion of Churches in Gospel-times, is not obscurely held forth in Isa. 19.23,24,25. Zeph 3.9. 1 Cor. 11. 16. & 14.32,36. 6. There hath constantly been in these Churches a profession of Communion, in giving the right hand of fellowship at the gathering of Churches, and Ordination of Elders: Which importeth a Confession, and obligeth to the practice thereof.

thereof. Without which we should also want an expedient and sufficient Cure for emergent Church-difficulties and Differences: with the want whereof our Way is charged, but unjustly, if this part of the Doctrine thereof were duly practised.

7. The manner of the Churches agreement herein, or enter'g into this Consecration, may be by each Church's open consenting unto the things here declared in Answer to this 2<sup>d</sup>. Question, as also to what is said thereabouts in Chap. 15. &c 16. of the Platform of Discipline, with reference to other Churches in this Colony & Countrey, as in Propol. 5<sup>th</sup>. is before expressed.

8. The manner of exercising and practising that Communion, which is consent or agreement specially tendeth unto, may be, by making use occasionally of Elders or able Brethren of other Churches; or by the more solemn Meetings of both Elders and Messengers in lesser or greater Councils, as the master shall require.

